



News Release

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Federal tobacco tax increase a good reason to quit smoking

State offering free resources to help people kick the habit

OLYMPIA – A new federal tobacco tax that takes effect April 1 will raise the cost of a pack of cigarettes by 62 cents. Public health officials expect the price increase to prompt more people to quit smoking. The Department of Health’s toll-free Tobacco Quit Line is a great place to start.

In response to the expected loss in sales as more people quit smoking, several major tobacco companies, including Altria, R.J. Reynolds, and Lorillard Tobacco Company, recently raised prices on popular brands. Along with the federal tax, these price increases will make cigarettes a lot more expensive.

“Things are tough right now. This increase could cost regular smokers hundreds of dollars a year, which is another good reason to quit smoking. Quitting will help your health and your pocketbook,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “Our Tobacco Quit Line is there to help when people are ready. Free coaching and nicotine patches or gum are just a phone call away.”

The Tobacco Quit Line —1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-877-2NO-FUME in Spanish) — is a crucial part of the state’s efforts to reduce tobacco use. People who call speak to trained quit coaches who are often former smokers themselves. These coaches help callers recognize their smoking triggers and develop a personal plan to quit. Along with coaching, people who are ready to quit can also receive a free supply of nicotine patches or gum (a \$145 value) through the quit line.

The Department of Health is partnering with Washington-owned Bartell Drugs to connect people who smoke with resources to help them quit. Pharmacists at the 55 Bartell Drugs stores will talk to customers about their tobacco use and encourage them to call the Tobacco Quit Line for free support. Advertising for the quit line will be placed throughout stores and in customer mailings. In addition, from April 20 through May 3, Bartell Drugs will offer a \$10 coupon for its brand of nicotine patches and gum.

—More—

“At Bartell Drugs we have a strong commitment to helping our customers and employees live healthier lives,” said Carol Carnahan, RPh, Director of Pharmacy, Bartell Drugs. “We are pleased to be working with the Department of Health on this great program.

Typically, when the price of cigarettes goes up, fewer adults and youth smoke. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids estimates that in Washington, the federal tobacco tax increase will prompt 14,800 adults to quit smoking and prevent 30,400 kids from becoming adults who smoke. That expected decrease could save the state millions in future healthcare and Medicaid costs.

In addition to reducing smoking among adults and youth, the new federal tobacco tax will help fund the expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, covering nearly 4 million more children nationwide. Washington is expected to receive about \$94 million for children’s medical coverage. With those funds, the state will be able to expand the number of families eligible for this help.

[Media materials](http://www.quitline.com/pressroom.php) (<http://www.quitline.com/pressroom.php>) are available online.

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